



Spiritual Warfare

We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. (1 John 3:16)

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Have you ever considered the fact that God's worldview and people's worldview are different? (See Prov 16:25, 21:2; Isa 55:6-11) Popular opinion and religious traditions have influenced everyone except the omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent God.

Your reading this indicates that you may have reached a time in your life where you have a teachable spirit and are ready to take a fresh look at the worldview of God. If this is true, you will have fun learning to increase your intimacy and peace with God and others.

Most topics are multifaceted. Though effort has been made to be balanced, certainly not every facet is covered here. This is more of a springboard to stimulate your thinking and motivate you to study the Bible more thoroughly.

You may not agree with everything presented here, but chew on it and keep reading. We welcome your feedback at JesusForKing.com!

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Training

The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.
(1 Tim 1:5)

We love, because He first loved us. If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. (1 John 4:19-21)

Countless millions have given their lives for the love of their country. How much more should we give our lives for the love of God and His kingdom? He makes it clear that we can't love Him apart from loving those whom He created, whom *He gave His life for*. Jesus is King! Our job as His ambassadors (2 Cor 5:20) is to persuade people (2 Cor 5:11) to elect Him King of their life.

Despite much opposition from the adversary, the first century church preached the gospel to the entire world in one generation. (See Col 1:6, 23) I don't know if this has ever been done since, but every twenty to thirty years there is a whole new generation around the world that needs to hear the gospel. Will you help make sure that your generation is one that gets it done?

Have recent generations preached the gospel to the entire world? If you continue to do what you've always done, you'll continue to get what you've always got. It might be time to take a fresh look at how the first century church did it. We know it worked for them.

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. *You are the light of the world*. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matt 5:13-16)

The kingdom of God is an active force, not a passive one. You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you. There is no neutrality. You choose each day to be active salt and light or inactive, good-for-nothing darkness. Be salt, or be trampled under foot by men.

Are people in your community talking about Jesus Christ because of your good work? Proactive evangelism is one way to describe His winning battle plan. There are innumerable ways to seek the lost and try to win them to Jesus. It's up to each generation to work out the details of how *they* are going to reach the world in *their* generation.

The goal of this study guide is to focus your attention on becoming an *effective spiritual warrior*. This chapter is about *marching forward*. The following chapters are about *standing firm against the schemes of the devil*. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but there are *both physical and spiritual* aspects that we need to be prepared for because they have *eternal* ramifications.

That no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes. (2 Cor 2:11)

We know that we are of God, and that *the whole world lies in the power of the evil one*. (1 John 5:19)

“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.” (Matt 10:16) Everyone who is not in God’s kingdom is in Satan’s. We are snatching people out of the fire. (See Jude 23)

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to *stand firm against the schemes of the devil*. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Eph 6:10-12)

Satan makes disciples of nations by enslaving them to sin and tyrants. He uses wicked rulers to oppress the truth and false religion to deceive the masses. Evil men bent on world domination manipulate the masses by influencing entertainment and media, education, the economy, wars, and global threats.

The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3:8)

Spiritual Revolution - The overthrow or renunciation of Satan and his followers and his replacement with King Jesus by the governed.

Turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God. (Acts 26:18)

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col 1:13-14)

We willingly (See Mark 8:34-38) and joyfully (See Acts 5:41) lay down our lives for our King, knowing that we are guaranteed a resurrection. We are ambassadors, agents behind enemy lines. “Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.” (Phil 2:14-15)

Our struggle is against world forces of darkness and spiritual forces of wickedness. We struggle not with physical weapons nor for physical gain, but for the souls of men. Jesus has given orders that He expects to be obeyed until the end. The *Full Stewardship* study guide looks at the successful role God has delegated to each form of government. Satan corrupts people and uses them in his schemes of distorting these God-ordained institutions:

- Self-Government
- Family Government
- Civil Government
- Church Government

Christian revolutionaries drive Satan out, replacing him with Jesus. We must diligently *learn and implement* the successful role God has delegated to each form of government. Start with yourself. Then work on your family, community, and church. Whether they listen or not, it is our duty to proclaim that each government repent and obey Jesus, the King of kings, Lord of lords, and judge of all. Their response will determine their eternal reward!

We do not war according to the flesh, for *the weapons of our warfare* are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God. (2 Cor 10:3-5)

The sword of the Spirit is the *word of God*. (Eph 6:17)

The *word of God* is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Heb 4:12)

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the *word of truth*. (2 Tim 2:15)

How do we learn to wield this divinely powerful weapon, the *sword of truth*? Develop a daily training regimen: study, pray, memorize, encourage one another, and evangelize. Read and study the Bible by yourself and with others. Spend time with God in His word and converse with Him about it. Commit passages of His word to memory and regularly review it.

Consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds. (Heb 10:24) Taking time to prepare for and deliver exhortations to other believers is a transforming process in itself. The same is true of teaching the gospel to the lost. These two aspects of Christianity take your level of understanding to far greater heights and help you to grow and mature.

We preach Jesus so that people will experience eternal life and be righteous and faithful stewards while on earth, subjecting themselves to King Jesus every minute of every day. The word of God is our field manual, our handbook. It instructs us in everything pertaining to life and godliness. (See 2 Peter 1:3) It contains our battle plan, the marching orders of our King:

Go, stand and speak to the people... the whole message of this Life. (Acts 5:20)

The whole message of this Life includes:

- ◆ A firmly grounded faith.
- ◆ God's principles of transformation.
- ◆ The realities of spiritual warfare.
- ◆ Successful stewardship.

Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "**All authority has been given to Me** in *heaven* and on *earth*. *Go* therefore and *make disciples of all the nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matt 28:18-20)

1. Go
2. Make Disciples
3. Baptize Them
4. Teach Them

We are to GO! We are to get out of our comfort zones and go beyond our spheres of influence. Jonah didn't want to do this, but God was insistent. The message of God's prophets, to both the Jewish people and to all the nations, has always been, "Repent." Who will carry God's message today? Who will call your nation to repentance? Who will call other nations to repentance?

Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isa 6:8)

We are to go make disciples. Disciple means student. Students learn from a teacher. *Go* doesn't mean put up a sign and wait for people to come to you. *Go* means get out the door and find someone to teach all that Jesus commanded. Paul reminded the elders of the church at Ephesus:

I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you *publicly* and from *house to house*. (Acts 20:20)

The first century church effectively utilized a two pronged approach that we should imitate. They did a lot of things publicly (which gets people's attention), and they kept right on teaching and preaching from house to house.

And every day, *in the temple* and *from house to house*, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. (Acts 5:42)

Publicity generates interest and curiosity. House to house teaching is where relationships are built and is ideal for personalized instruction. Many people don't feel comfortable asking a question at a public meeting. But a small group Bible study, in their home or someone else's, is ideal for communicating with people at their level and laying a solid foundation.

For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst. (Matt 18:20)

It is also wise to imitate the way Jesus sent His disciples out to preach in pairs. (See Luke 10:1) The testimony of two witnesses is more credible than one. Grab a partner and go find someone to teach! Of course, it's a good idea to take someone who knows more than you. But, if you knew enough to become a Christian, you know what others need to know. Go make the good confession to everyone that Jesus is Lord and Christ.

Proactive evangelism is learned by going. It is a key element in the growth of each Christian. Anyone who has ever taught will tell you that they learned a lot more than the ones they were teaching. JesusForKing.com is loaded with tools and resources to help you be effective.

Teach your friends, your family, your neighbors, and anyone else who wants to learn. Anyone can get a Bible study if they ask enough people. Helping people overcome their sin problems and motivating them to righteousness is learned by doing. With practice, you'll build people's interest to the point that they want to keep learning. Be patient and diligent and they'll soon be bringing others into the study.

The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth. (2 Tim 2:24-25)

If we are to follow the very effective example of the first century church, we need to creatively generate publicity and get out into people's homes to truly make disciples and teach them everything pertaining to life and godliness. Can you start a Bible study with some people you know? If you can get other Christians involved, take turns leading it to give others the opportunity to grow. As your group grows, act like leaven and divide into two groups. Go for exponential growth! Expand throughout your geographic region and throughout the world.

Let's call Bible things by Bible names and *do Bible things in Bible ways*:

Declaring to men that *all* people everywhere should repent. (Acts 17:30)

All who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord. (Acts 19:10)

Who in the world are we trying to reach with the gospel? **All**, but specifically: *truth seekers*. (Matt 7:7; 2 Thess 2:10) Truth seekers come from all walks of life. You can't target one segment of the population and expect to find *all* the truth seekers. If you want to find *all* the truth seekers you have to reach *all* the people. Some will be ripe for harvesting. Others may not be ready until they have heard the good news several times.

But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and *bear fruit with perseverance*. (Luke 8:15)

You may have a hard time believing this until you try it: some will be persuaded; many others simply don't want to be. (See John 3:19-21) To some degree it's a sorting game. We're trying to find those who are interested in truth. Don't be disappointed when you find that most people aren't. It's a lot like mining for gold: you've got to go through a lot of dirt and gravel to find gold.

Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matt 7:13-14)

From everyone who has been given much, much will be required. (Luke 12:48)

The gospel was preached to the entire world with primitive means by the first century church. God has blessed us with the resources and mass communications to preach to the entire world in

this generation. We can plant seeds, generating interest and excitement, and follow up with evangelism teams to reap the harvest, so that *all* will hear the word of the Lord.

Technology gives us a tremendous advantage over those who spread the word in the first century. Mass production and distribution of Bible literature, audio, and video; the interactive nature of the internet; advanced traveling capabilities; and many other things can be utilized by modern Christians to generate publicity and spread the good news.

God Created Buzz

The people were *in a state of expectation* and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ. (See Luke 3:15)

Jesus expected *entire cities* to repent after He visited them. (See Mat 11:20-24) His preaching must have reached *everyone*, from the leaders down.

Paul testified to King Agrippa that he was confident that none of these things escaped his notice because *they hadn't been done in a corner*. (See Acts 26:26)

When Paul arrived in Rome he had a ready-made audience. (See Acts 28:21-22) The Jewish authorities said they'd *heard much about this sect* and they wanted to know more.

When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe. (Acts 28:23-24)

The Jewish nation and even some Gentiles were anxiously awaiting the kingdom of God. The prophets had been talking about the coming Messiah for centuries. John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus and Jesus for the apostles. The first century church talked to everyone about Jesus.

Jesus told the apostles: One sows and another reaps. I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor. (John 4:37-38)

What about where you're at today? Is it a time of sowing or a time of reaping? Others have labored and you have entered into their labor. Utilize mass media, public meetings, house to house Bible studies, and evangelism teams. Be salt. Be light. Sow seed. Create buzz. Reap the harvest.

The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was *all* leavened. (Matt 13:33)

How are you going to reach *all* people in your vicinity with the message? Plan, do, review. Plan your work, work your plan, and then review your results to see what you can do better. Then, plan, do, review. Visit JesusForKing.com to find some ways to create buzz (free publicity). Our King has given the marching orders. It's up to us to salute and execute the details.

And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.” (Mark 16:15-16)

Knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men. (2 Cor 5:11)

“Those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.” (Acts 8:4) Anyone, anywhere in the world can become a Christian and ‘start a church’ by following the New Testament.

Evangelism Teams

These men who have upset the world have come here also. (Acts 17:6)

How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? (Rom 10:14-15)

As always, the Holy Spirit shows us how to get things done. A careful study of the book of Acts (take a quick look at Acts 14:1-3, 17:17, 19:8-10) reveals the military operations of God’s advancing kingdom.

Among the ranks of the New Testament church were faithful men who were especially capable of teaching others, just as there are today. These were sent out to evangelize. These teams also took along and trained apprentices, some of whom became evangelists.

A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher. (Luke 6:40)

The book of Acts spends a good deal of time focusing on the evangelism team that started with Barnabas and Saul (later called Paul), and they also had John as their helper. (See Acts 13:1-5) Of all the prophets and teachers at Antioch, why were Barnabas and Saul sent out? Evidence is given in an earlier chapter. (See Acts 11:22-26) For an entire year they *taught considerable numbers!* This is the goal and these men accomplished it.

Although Paul’s team didn’t reach the world by themselves, their work is forever recorded as the prime example of how to do it. They typically spent anywhere from a couple of months to a couple of years establishing a congregation. Then they entrusted their disciples to the grace of God and went on to the next place to start over again. They normally returned later and appointed elders, and also visited to strengthen and encourage. Since this is the primary pattern revealed in the New Testament, other inspired teams probably worked similarly.

In God’s perfect design, after the evangelists move on, others in the congregation have more of an opportunity to step up and serve. This results in accelerated spiritual growth in disciples. Leaders become evident and more preachers are sent out. This is how the entire world was reached in one generation, but not without much opposition from the adversary.

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to *faithful men* who will be able to teach others also. (2 Tim 2:2)

Read all about the adventures of Barnabas, Paul, and others in the book of Acts. If we want to ‘make disciples of all the nations’ in this generation, let’s follow their inspired example. God’s battle plan worked then; it will also work today. First century congregations produced preachers who took the gospel to all the nations. They did this against the will of the Jewish and Roman authorities, often suffering terrible persecutions.

Who’s on the Lord’s side? Muslims, Communists, and others persecute those who preach Jesus today. In spite of this, independent congregations should send evangelism teams to all the nations to make disciples as Jesus commanded. ‘*We must obey God rather than men.*’ Let’s reach our entire generation. There are millions of souls who have never heard the good news.

Jesus gave His life to save us so that we would give our lives to save others. Is now the acceptable time to get off the bench and get in on the action? Is now the acceptable time to make Jesus’ words a reality?

Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must *deny himself*, and take up his cross and follow Me.” (Matt 16:24)

Paul added: Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. (2 Tim 2:3-4)

Do you want to enlist as a full-time soldier? Make sure it’s not just position ambition; that you’re not like the hypocritical Pharisees who did all their deeds to be noticed by men. You must have a sincere desire to do the work of an evangelist. You must ‘do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard others as more important than yourself.’

Wartime conditions require wartime priorities. Each evangelism team needs just enough to survive. If we have food and covering we shall be content. (See 1 Tim 6:8) There are rewards for obeying the truth in this life, but the greatest reward is in the life to come. We do not seek rewards from men; our reward comes from God.

“Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.” (Matt 6:33) We must have spiritual priorities and strategies if we are to prevail in this spiritual war. In order to have a positive attitude and build passion for our cause, God has provided the assistance of the church. The kingdom is made up of many members working together. Not all of the members have the same function, but all of the members are to deny themselves and execute the King’s orders. Some send. Some go. All help.

Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.” (Matt 9:37-38)

Support Our Troops

They went out for the sake of the Name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth. (3 John 7-8)

Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? ... So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel. (1 Cor 9:7-14)

Evangelists do not charge for preaching the gospel. Those who are *sent* get their living from those who *send*. This, along with sending *teams*, creates accountability so that those who are sent will take heed to the ministry they have received, that they may fulfill it. (Also see 2 Tim 4:5; Col 4:17)

The picture we get from the inspired example of Paul's team is that when they went out to preach they were supported by congregations that they had started or helped. (See 2 Cor 11:7-9; Phil 4:14-19) They were repeatedly on the move. They had a world to reach, as does each new generation.

The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. (Gal 6:6)

If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. (1 Cor 9:11-12)

What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel. For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. (1 Cor 9:18-19)

When evangelism teams do not have enough support, or if they run out of money to supply their basic needs, part or all of the team gets a job to support the work. (See Acts 18:1-5; Phil 4:10-19) In other cases, it may be more prudent to get a job and work hard as an example for new Christians.

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. For you yourselves know how *you ought to follow our example*, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but *with labor and hardship we kept working night and day* so that we would not be a burden to any of you; not because we do not have the right to this, but *in order to offer ourselves as a model* for you, so that you would follow our example. For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: ***if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either***. For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. But as for you, brethren, *do not grow weary of doing good*. (2 Thess 3:6-13)

Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed. (2 Cor 9:6-8)

Honor the LORD from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine. (Prov 3:9-10)

There are countless ways to participate in evangelism. Find a need and fill it. Be creative. Take initiative. Make the most of every opportunity to share the good news. Generate publicity and conduct house to house Bible studies. Financially support evangelism teams who are taking the gospel around the globe.

Pray for open doors for the word to spread rapidly. Who can get more done, us or God? God can and does do great works in answer to prayer, and being an effective prayer warrior is something every Christian can and should do to support our troops.

Praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. (Col 4:3-6)

For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, *you also joining in helping us through your prayers*, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many. (2 Cor 1:8-11)

Jesus has given us our marching orders. (See Mat 28:18-20) We are to go into all the world. We are to make disciples. We are to baptize them. And we are to teach them to obey Jesus in everything pertaining to life and godliness.

Every individual should have a goal of helping with evangelism. Every congregation should have a goal of sending evangelism teams out to preach the gospel. Every generation should have a goal of reaching the entire world.

One effective way to direct your energy is by utilizing the resources at JesusForKing.com. They are designed to rapidly enlighten truth seekers, empower them with an understanding of the spiritual war we are engaged in, and equip them to be overwhelming conquerors! You'll find tools that can be used immediately by anyone and duplicated by everyone, free of charge. The series this study guide is part of was written so that you can quickly learn how to implement dramatically positive changes in your life and impact the world for Christ.

We proclaim Him, admonishing *every man* and teaching *every man* with all wisdom, so that we may present *every man* complete in Christ. *For this purpose* also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me. (Col 1:28-29)

First The Physical

Satan wants to bring hell to you and your neighbors' doorstep *physically, spiritually and eternally*. The Scripture reveals that there are two major ways that Satan wages war against the saints and binds families and communities under the chains of darkness: he uses false religion to distort the truth and evil government to suppress the truth.

There was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. *And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.*" (Rev 12:7-12)

So the dragon was enraged... and went off to make war with the rest... who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. (Rev 12:17)

Satan wants murder, mayhem, fraud, and fear to spread everywhere. He corrupts individuals with sin, and is then able to use them in his schemes. His forces of darkness are striving to corrupt every individual, destroy every family, enslave every nation, and deceive every congregation. Time is limited! In a discussion with some Pharisees...

Jesus said to them, "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. *He was a murderer from the beginning*, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, *he speaks from his own nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:42-44)

The thief comes only to *steal and kill and destroy*; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. (John 10:10)

Prepare for Persecution

...So that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction. (1 Thess 3:3-5)

Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. (2 Tim 3:12-13)

Satan is called the ruler of this world and the god of this world. (See John 12:31, 16:11; 2 Cor 4:4) As long as this world exists there will never be peace between the forces of darkness and the forces of

light. In this great struggle there are various times and places where it appears that the scales are tipped one way or the other.

Countless millions have been persecuted and put to death by enemies of the truth and by evil men who stop at nothing to lord it over their fellow man. Not only were these things done in ancient history, but in the 20th century more than one-hundred million people were murdered by their own government!

Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matt 10:28)

Sinful men who idolize money and power are easily manipulated by Satan to wage war against the saints. False religious and evil political forces of darkness suppress the truth because it sets men free (See John 8:31-32) spiritually and politically. Righteous men who govern themselves are difficult to tyrannize, but wicked men need many masters to govern their behavior.

The devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, “*All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.*” Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’” (Matt 4:8-10)

The whole world lies in the power of the evil one. (1 John 5:19)

It is clear that Satan has power over the kingdoms of the world. Notice also that Satan desires worship. Many of the tyrants of this world desire the same thing. Isaiah chapter 14 and Ezekiel chapter 28 reveal that it was Satan who stood behind the god-kings of Babylon and Tyre. The Bible and history show us that the world plunges into darkness when an evil world government coerces the people to worship a Pharaoh or a Caesar or a Pope rather than God. Slavery for the masses; luxury for the elites; no middle-class.

Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD! (Ps 2:1-3)

Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? (James 2:6)

A wicked man receives a bribe to pervert the ways of justice. (Prov 17:23)

Satan’s tactics really haven’t changed much. There are still brutal men today who use the power of government to crush their opposition and maintain their control. On the other hand, there have been times when righteous people ruled, which enabled Christianity to flourish. The young United States of America is an example of this.

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who *through fear of death were subject to slavery* all their lives. (Heb 2:14-15)

Satan tries to disrupt God's pattern for civil government by inciting rebellion and by corrupting the authorities. If lawlessness increases, law enforcement must increase. Satan's goal is slavery. (See also 1 Sam 8, 15:22-23 & Isa 10:1-3) As personal responsibility increases, personal freedom can increase. If the authorities over us are out of line, we must make godly appeals to them, and if necessary, take our appeals up the chain of authority.

Will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? (Luke 18:7)

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim 2:1-4)

We are to pray for the authorities so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life and spread the gospel unhindered by wicked men. What do authorities have to do with this? According to Paul in Romans 13, along with the rest of Scripture, the civil authorities are supposed to oppress criminal activity. When crime runs rampant because the civil authorities aren't doing their job, it makes it more difficult to lead a tranquil and quiet life and spread the gospel.

When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when a wicked man rules, people groan. (Prov 29:2)

What do you think goes through the mind of a tyrant when he reads God's message to the slave-master Pharaoh, "Let My people go!?" Or when a wicked ruler reads of John the Baptist rebuking Herod for his immorality? Or when corrupt authorities read about the prophets, Jesus, Paul, and many others, exposing the hypocrisy and evil ambitions of those in power?

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; *for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.* (Matt 5:10-12)

Petty criminals commit petty crimes. Some of the shrewdest criminals lust for lording it over their fellow man, and find an avenue for doing so in civil government. Once they taste power, they become even more ruthless in their drive for control of others. They see Christianity as a threat to them because God's authority supersedes their authority, and Christians are God's representatives who are to preach truth and justice and expose wickedness.

God's word judges their sin and they are found guilty. If they would rather enjoy their moment of power than submit to the Almighty, they usually try to silence the messenger with the force of the law. Nonetheless, we are to be His faithful messengers.

Human rights were written in stone by God when He issued the Ten Commandments. The commandment, "You shall not murder," grants you and everyone else a right to life. "You shall not commit adultery," grants you a right to marry. "You shall not steal," grants you a right to

private property. “You shall not bear false witness,” grants you a right to reputation. And, “You shall not covet,” grants you a right to prosper.

Only the wicked try to infringe upon your rights. Petty thugs do things like break into your home and rob you at gun point. Smart thugs lie, cheat, steal and murder their way into positions of power. They conspire, organize, and manipulate the force of government to devour the vineyard and plunder the poor, crushing God’s people and grinding the face of the poor.

Satan makes disciples of the nations by enslaving people to sin and tyrants. He has been very effective throughout history and in the world today. He uses evil men bent on world domination to manipulate the masses by controlling the media and entertainment industry, education, economies, wars, global threats, false religions, and evil governments.

Cowards run and hide from this giant just like the Israelites did from Goliath. Because of a lack of faith, many are willing to become slaves. Only a boy named David saw Goliath as a midget. In fact, to him, the giant was no taller than David’s knees. His victorious faith picture was of Goliath lying on the ground with his head lopped off! Who will be a David in our generation?

David said to Goliath, “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, *that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel*, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD’S and He will give you into our hands.” (1 Sam 17:45-47)

The world forces of darkness conspire to bring all nations to their knees. Citizens and representatives have allowed their tax dollars to be misused to empower evil regimes and global government. The forces of wickedness use the dictatorial state to oppress Christianity with a goal of bringing the multitudes into eternal torment. They’re big, but God is BIGGER!

The LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear. The battle is the LORD’S and in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom the enemy has taunted, we will liberate people from every tribe and nation and tongue from Satan’s grip! We must enlighten, empower, and equip the nations with truth.

The forces of darkness strive for power over the entire world. They have used violence to take over many countries. Others they corrupt from within (wicked people need many masters). They infiltrate all areas of power and influence to guide people into a global government trap.

Who should be in those positions of power and influence? Who should be on guard against the schemes of the devil? Who has the character to govern with righteousness and justice?

It is the church’s job to make known to rulers and authorities the manifold wisdom of God. The Scripture tells us how government is supposed to operate. Those in power will often tickle your

ears and tell you what you want to hear. If they continue in wickedness they should be replaced with God-fearing individuals who will boldly oppose the schemes of the devil.

Jesus, His apostles, and the first century church subjected themselves to the legal system that was in place, and they upset the world. (See Rom 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17) We operate under the law and influence people in every way we can. But if the law of men forbids keeping the commands of God, “We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29) With freedom comes responsibility.

Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but *if you are able also to become free, rather do that*. For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave. You were bought with a price; *do not become slaves of men*. (1 Cor 7:21-23)

Is it easier to gain freedom or to keep it? The price of keeping it is eternal vigilance. Satan never stops trying to implement tyranny on a global scale. Saints should not be ignorant of his schemes. He uses anarchy to herd nations into the police-state trap, giving up their freedoms for the sake of supposed safety. Utopian schemes are thrust upon the world under the guise of global peace. International problems will supposedly be solved, apart from the principles of the Bible.

Many Christians are ignorant of the fact that they are the number one enemy of wicked rulers who feel that Christianity must be eradicated in order for the world to enjoy peace from intolerance. Political correctness dictates that the only thing you can be intolerant of is God's moral standards found in the Bible. The ‘hate speech’ of calling immoral behavior a sin is the only ‘sin’ that cannot be tolerated. When wickedness thrives it keeps the wicked in power.

The world forces of darkness have to operate by deception. If enough people call their bluff, their house of cards will topple. If people hold their civil servants accountable and demand prosecution of the criminal traitors who have helped prop up tyrannical regimes throughout the world, many billions of people would have the opportunity to hear and obey the gospel. Satan understands the nature of the battle and what is at stake. How about you?

Christians are the light of the world, the salt of the earth. We are to bring the flavor of Christ into every area of life. We are to expose the world forces of darkness. We are to understand the nature of the battle. We know that Satan works every possible angle to deceive the nations, and we must work every possible angle to enlighten them. We are to rescue whole generations of Satan's victims who have been captivated by sin.

We learn new skills, take on new roles, and adapt to new technologies so that we can be effective soldiers. We meticulously study the marching orders of our King, dutifully obeying every command. We demonstrate supreme mental and physical discipline, leading with enthusiasm for righteousness, our character defined by integrity and honor. We are excellent examples of uprightness of heart. Our purpose is to destroy the works of the devil.

Sin Destroys Relationships and Effectiveness

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now

working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. (Eph 2:1-3)

Through prayer and vigilant labor we have the opportunity to make disciples of all the nations. The enemy tries to divert our attention from the task at hand. He wants us consumed with idolatry, pleasure, and instant gratification so that we suffer the consequences of foolishness.

The borrower becomes the lender's slave. (Prov 22:7)

What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. (James 4:1-4)

Committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. (Rom 1:26-32)

How effective are you going to be if your mind is set on the flesh? What kind of soldier will you be if you create conflict when you don't get your way? How much vitality would you have to spread the word if you contract a sexually transmitted disease? How much help can you offer if you bury yourself in debt? Satan uses all of these tactics and more to try and *ruin you!*

Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation. (Eph 5:5-18)

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine and valiant men in mixing strong drink, who justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the rights of the ones who are in the right! (Isa 5:20-23)

Do not be deceived. The forces of wickedness work at getting people to accept immoral behavior. They exalt wickedness and suppress righteousness. We should not only suppress wickedness, but more importantly, we should exalt and exemplify righteousness.

The mind of the intelligent seeks knowledge, but the mouth of fools feeds on folly. (Prov 15:14)

Seeking knowledge and understanding is praiseworthy, so the enemy exalts foolishness. One of the battlegrounds is media and entertainment. It has a powerful influence on society. Christians can use it to impact the world for righteousness just as the wicked use it to promote and exalt folly.

It is folly to do things that destroy your mental and physical health. Keeping yourself fit helps you have the energy and vitality to be an effective spiritual warrior. You can't love your family, neighbors, and the lost if you are inebriated with drugs or alcohol. It takes self control and a higher purpose to deny worldly appetites that result in bad health, anxiety, or violence.

For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. (2 Peter 2:18-22)

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. *Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler*; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:12-17)

The Family is a Major Target of the Enemy

If you've ever seen a happy, healthy family with a strong marriage and children who obey their parents, you've seen why marriage problems and rebellious children are so important to Satan's strategy. Family is where we learn to love and care for others. If we can be patient and kind to the people we live with, we can be patient and kind to just about anybody. If the family can be destroyed, the entire society will rapidly deteriorate.

Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand. (Matt 12:25)

The home is not only the place where children are taught obedience and honor, which is the first commandment with a promise (See Eph 6:1-3), it is also the place where grandparents are cared for. The Biblical model creates strong families, but it requires sacrifices of love by godly men and women. Within the home, wisdom, knowledge and faith are learned and passed from generation to generation.

Satan wants to rip families apart. He wants care of the elderly turned over to strangers so their wealth of wisdom is wasted. He wants children to be raised by strangers so they are away from the protection and guidance of the family. No stranger can give a child the loving discipline and instruction that parents can. The one who controls the minds of youth controls the society within a few generations. Free people don't allow the civil government to educate their children if they want to remain free.

Some time ago, deceitful men convinced parents that in order for children to be successful they needed their heads filled with facts that the parents weren't able to provide. It was simply a ploy to persuade them to surrender responsibility for their children. Now, several generations later, we

are reaping the fruit. Children's hearts are turned from their parents to their peers. They rebel against the protection of their parents and fall into a cesspool of caustic sin.

In addition to everything already mentioned, the enemy attacks the family with ungodly social engineering that perverts the roles of men and women, squanders a family's resources, and causes the destruction of the family, the society, and ultimately, people's eternities.

And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, *they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.* (Rom 1:28-32)

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. (Eph 4:17-19)

Our adversary wants deception and destruction spread to all the nations. If we are not alert to this reality, we may carelessly fall for his schemes. He would like to lull us into complacency. He'd like us to be ignorant of danger and think that a comfortable life should be our primary pursuit. Eat, drink, and be merry. Get wrapped up in planning a nice little life for yourself so you can live happily ever after.

While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. (1 Thess 5:3)

Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will bring about at the proper time -- He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen. (1 Tim 6:12-16)

"FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED." *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.* For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:31-39)

Then The Spiritual

Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." (John 14:6)

He also said: Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves... Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. (Matt 7:15-21)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

Twenty-six out of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament have warnings about false prophets, false teachers, false brethren, false apostles, false doctrine, etc. We are indeed at war.

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns *like a lamb* and he spoke as a dragon. He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. *He performs great signs*, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. *And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs* which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life. And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. (Rev 13:11-15)

And the beast was seized, and with him the *false prophet who performed the signs in his presence*, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. (Rev 19:20)

Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is impersonated by the one who had two horns like a lamb but spoke as a dragon. Throughout history this false prophet and his followers have even performed great signs to deceive those who dwell on the earth.

Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name *perform many miracles?*" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS." (Matt 7:22-23)

And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many... Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many... *For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders*, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect." (Matt 24:4-5, 11, 24)

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan *disguises himself as an angel of light*. Therefore it is not surprising if

his servants also *disguise themselves as servants of righteousness*, whose end will be according to their deeds. (2 Cor 11:13-15)

The spiritual forces of wickedness are not to be taken lightly. Their evil intent is to deceive and drag as many as possible with them into, “the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt 25:41) Their most effective means of deceiving people is by impersonating Christ and His church. Scripture informs us that they are even able to perform miracles.

I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! (Gal 1:6-8)

There have been numerous men throughout history who have made claims about visions they have seen or angels who have appeared to them. The Scriptures we just looked at indicate that some of these claims may be real. The problem is that they preach a gospel contrary to the one that was preached by the apostles and recorded in the Scripture for all future generations.

God is not a God of confusion. (1 Cor 14:33) It’s the devil who wants everyone to be confused about truth. God’s plan for communicating to our lost and dying world is ingenious: we ultimately don’t have to put our trust in the word of men; we can put our trust in the word of God. He’s given us the Bible, a standard that every generation can correctly measure itself against.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; *so will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.* (Isa 55:9-11)

God can and does *send His word anywhere in the world there is a truth seeker*. Our problem is that we are not able to see as God sees. We cannot look at someone and know whether or not they are honest. It is not our job to make those judgments. It is our job to plant the seed of the word of God.

But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance. (Luke 8:15)

False Religion

In addition to counterfeit Christianity, which we’ll talk more about, Satan deceives the multitudes with many religions that claim no Christian connection. These pagan religions vary from belief in no god (atheism), to belief in many gods (polytheism), to belief in oneself being god (humanism), to belief in nature being god (pantheism).

In the midst of the confusion these false religions seem to agree on one thing: multiculturalism is good, but belief in the one and only God of the Bible is bad. Satan’s fatal lie is that there is no

such thing as truth. If there is no truth there is no falsehood. Neither is there good and evil. He wants everything to be ‘mushy’ and confusing, like we can’t know anything for sure. ‘Don’t bother trying to figure things out. If it feels good do it.’ Then wake up one day burning in hell.

God is just the opposite. He wants us to *know the truth*. He spent almost two millennia having it written down for us. After all that God did to establish the truth of His Word, do you think He would tell us to ‘throw logic and reason out the window and go with your heart because you can’t trust anything else?’

The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jer 17:9)

A common element of false religions is that the people in them assume it is true if it ‘feels right.’ Maybe they were raised in it and just haven’t examined the foundations; or maybe they even experienced some strong emotions or supernatural influence. There is no question that many people, in probably just about every false religion, have had an emotional experience.

You or someone you know has likely been influenced by a false religion; either by direct experience or indirectly through someone’s testimony. Satan doesn’t care what he gets you with or how good it feels now, as long as he’s got you when you die; after it’s too late to change. He craftily appeals to the desires of the flesh and tempts you with power over others.

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. (1 John 2:15-18)

But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. (2 Cor 11:3)

Today’s spiritual revolutionaries must be trained and equipped to help people overcome the false doctrines that enslave them to sin. Satan wants to convince everyone that they’ll always be a slave to sin. If he repeats, “*You can’t overcome!*” often enough, he hopes you’ll believe him. God says otherwise. There are many empowering and motivating Scriptures like the following:

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (Gal 5:16)

We are not going to dissect all of the false religions, but it is important to beware of the fact that Satan uses deceptive bait to draw people into a trap and capture their souls for all eternity. Some of the bait includes yoga and New Age meditation, psychic and witchcraft-related activity, magic, Ouija boards, tarot cards, horoscopes, channeling, and mind-altering drugs. Some of these things are teasers to get you looking in a certain direction; while others are deadly poison that once ingested you may not be able to recover from.

I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument... See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ... Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind. (Col 2:4, 8, 18)

Some modern idols include musicians, movie and sports stars, and politicians; along with “immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed.” (Col 3:5) God once cleaned the world with a flood because the intent of man’s heart was on evil continually and the earth was filled with violence. (Gen 6:5-13) Infatuation with violence or anything besides God is a form of idolatry.

Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited. (Heb 13:9)

Food can become an idol as easily as physical health can. Some people worry about everything they can imagine while others create drama to tell others about. Some look to the state rather than God to provide for their needs, and the state becomes their god.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor 10:3-5)

Whatever your heart follows is part of your religion. If it’s in accordance with God’s word then it is part of your service to Him. A common reason the people of God were judged in days of old was because of the paganism they brought into their lives. Satan would like Christians to live split lives so that he can get his foot in the door. He would like us to think that we are sacred on Sunday and secular the rest of the week. ‘The mind set on the flesh is death.’

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, *do all to the glory of God.* (1 Cor 10:31)

Whatever you do in word or deed, *do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (Col 3:17)

Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But *seek first His kingdom and His righteousness*, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matt 6:31-34)

And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:19)

Jesus started a spiritual revolution to overthrow the false religious authorities of this world by enlightening people’s thinking. That’s why they crucified Him. He was the first in a long line of

martyrs that follow in His steps. The revolution rages on! The false prophets of today don't like being exposed any more than they did in Jesus' day. But this is exactly what must be done.

After we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for *you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen*, even as they did from the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost. (1 Thess 2:1-2, 14-16)

As the Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed, be prepared for intense opposition and persecution from false religious authorities who suppress the truth in order to keep themselves in power. Jesus has all authority, and He should be obeyed above all.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matt 28:18-20)

Let your focus be on preaching Jesus, rather than attacking someone's religion. Attacking just makes people defensive and closes them to what you have to say about Jesus. Whereas if you prove that Jesus is Lord and Christ and teach His ways, they should realize their previous beliefs are wrong. At some point you may need to help them figure out some of the specifics.

When they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. (Acts 8:12)

And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "*This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.*" (Acts 17:2-3)

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. (2 Tim 2:15)

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. (2 Tim 2:2-4)

God's army, the church, is Satan's number one enemy. We are marching into his territory snatching people from his grip. We are his only opposition on earth. We are involved in a great spiritual war; a competition for every soul on earth!

The enemy wants nothing more than to shut the mouth of Christians. He does not want us teaching people how to be saved, how to be transformed, how to resist his schemes, how to build

healthy families and communities that protect the weak from the wicked and promote righteousness and godly values. He wants these teachings labeled fanatical, heretical, hate speech, chauvinistic, intolerant, or anything else to give the truth a bad name.

But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned. (Titus 3:9-11)

Satan does everything he can to stop the church. Not only does he use external pressure, but he also attacks from within. One of Satan's strategies is to divide and conquer. Divide generations, sexes, or races. Any difference will do. Segregation agitates differences rather than promoting unity. Youth, for example, are not the church of tomorrow. They need to learn to interact with and serve others *today*, or they are going to find something else to be part of *tomorrow*.

We can't march forward as a united, victorious army if we become entangled in arguments over trivial matters, personal preferences or traditions of men. The church is not a social club or a debate club. It's not that those things are discouraged, but it's just more important to evangelize than to socialize.

The adversary would like the church to have nothing but the *appearance* of activity, rather than working together as a team to seek and save the lost and destroy the works of the devil. This appearance is often created by condemning those who think or act differently. It's much easier to criticize those who are trying, than to risk trying yourself.

This fear-motivated, legalistic mentality makes everyone afraid to try anything productive for fear of criticism. Instead of love and mercy, it produces religious police who are always looking for someone to bust. These self-righteous hypocrites act like they're *really doing something* for God by condemning others, often behind their back, but they're only serving Satan's purposes.

But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. (2 Tim 2:23-26)

Some religions create appearances by putting huge sums of money into the design and construction of lavishly built 'temples' and 'churches'. They teach that attendance of religious ceremonies within these buildings is worship, as if God dwelt there. This is a holdover from the Old Testament. This example and teaching is not found in the New Testament. False religions depend on this kind of deception to keep themselves in business.

The New Testament talks a lot about public preaching and meeting from house to house, but it never mentions 'worshipping together' at church buildings. True worship is done at all times within your spirit. (See John 4:21-24) Also, financing the evangelism of lost souls is more important than erecting fancy buildings that are just going to burn someday. Christians should not resort to competing on a fleshly level.

Programs

There are innumerable ways to reach out to a lost and dying world. Some talented guys showed love and concern for others by offering a free car clinic on a Saturday. They performed oil changes and minor mechanical adjustments.

I use this illustration because everybody would readily acknowledge that the purpose of the church is not to provide car care, but people care. This was simply a ministry to try and reach people for Jesus. Regardless of the programs or ministries you might create or participate in, always remember that programs are not the purpose or goal of the church.

There's an old saying that has some truth to it: 'What you win them *with* is what you win them *to*.' This is true if you lose sight of the *real purpose* and start thinking that any particular program or function of the church *is an end in itself*.

Jesus fed the multitudes because of His love and compassion for them. This 'program' attracted multitudes. He then taught spiritual things and many fleshly-minded people departed from Him. Jesus felt *no need to continue the 'program'* in order to keep those who were not truth seekers.

Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled... As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? *You have words of eternal life*. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." (John 6:26-69)

Church growth that packs the pews with people who are not interested in obeying the truth is really *counterproductive*. They are a hindrance to the *spiritual growth* of the body. Satan would like us to lose sight of our mission in order to attract the multitudes. He'd like us to win people to programs. But if we win people to entertainment, for example, rather than winning them to Jesus, Satan can always win them with something more entertaining.

We are to win people to the love of God. If they are true disciples, they will begin to practice the love of God if they are taught to do so. If they are not true disciples, when your program loses its charm and something more exciting comes along, they fall away.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, *they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires*, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. (2 Tim 4:3-4)

If someone is hired to perform most of the service to the congregation, job security automatically becomes a factor. The one hired may be used and abused or manipulated into tickling the ears of those who hired him. (Also see John 10:11-13) In the New Testament church, multiple members taught and exhorted the congregation (See 1 Cor 14:26-40). You couldn't be fired for teaching spiritual things. Anything questionable could be dealt with openly so that all could learn and be exhorted.

If *one individual* is hoarding most of the service to the congregation, it creates a bottleneck that prevents the development of future leaders. A lot more is learned by the one preparing a message than is communicated during the delivery. The enemy wants Christians to miss out on this growth opportunity. The church should help members develop their ability to serve.

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. (James 3:16)

If people aren't growing, they become stagnant. Many only experience accidental spiritual growth since there is often no plan or process other than inviting people to church and hoping they absorb a few ideas here and there. Remember, we are to go make disciples. Those who are most effective should be sent out if they desire to do the work of an evangelist.

Things often get off track by subtle progression, which is why we need to be on guard by continually measuring ourselves with Scripture. Imagine the following scenario: a congregation became genuinely excited about something that was taught in the assembly. Great! But then some people were disappointed when things weren't as *exciting* the following assembly.

They responded by developing a subtle expectation that everything should always be exciting. Over time, to maintain the expected level of performance, people began to put on a show. Soon, the only ones who were allowed to be up front were the ones that could put on the best act. Other members were denied the personal growth that happens when you genuinely "consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds." (See Heb 10:24)

The leaders came to the conclusion that Scripture needed to be presented in a certain way, and if it was done wrong, it could hurt the momentum of the congregation. Certain unpopular Scriptures were ignored altogether, while others could only be interpreted correctly by the professionals. Members were discouraged from reading the Bible or teaching it to others unless they became schooled in the acceptable dogma.

But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men. (Matt 15:9)

The latter part of this illustration is at least a partial description of what resulted in the Dark Ages. Many are still struggling to throw off the chains of this way of thinking.

One link of the chain that still needs to be broken is the clergy-laity precept. There was no such thing in the New Testament church of the 1st century. Some Christians devoted themselves to evangelizing a lost and dying world. Others did the work of shepherding the local flock. But neither of these two highest offices in the church were the exclusive preachers and teachers. Any member of the local congregation could exhort and evangelize. The word of God has always been for the common man.

Evangelists and elders duplicate themselves by equipping the saints for works of service. They lead by example and teach the flock to learn by doing, to grow by giving, and to mature by meeting the needs of others. Gifts and talents are revealed when individuals in the body are shown how to serve, given the encouragement and opportunity to do so, and the assurance that they're not going to have their enthusiasm stomped on if they make a mistake.

But the greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. (Matt 23:11-12)

Every new disciple should be taught how to duplicate themselves (like leaven) by making new disciples. Every disciple of Christ is a student and gets a continuing education. Everything one needs to know to do the work of an evangelist or elder can and should be taught in every congregation (it worked in the first century). Each gift becomes evident as it is exercised in life, in the family, in the community, and in the church. Jesus said you will know them by their fruit.

There once was a time when the greatest service a Christian could offer was to suffer shame or martyrdom for Jesus. ***New Testament Christians stormed a hostile world for King Jesus.*** We spent the first chapter of this study guide looking at how the first century church sent the gospel into all the world in one generation. They weren't saddled with a clergy system.

Wartime conditions require wartime priorities and sacrifices. Today's church has the resources to send the gospel into all the world, and we should do so in every generation. The enemy wants these resources diverted to an unscriptural clergy and the institutions needed to certify them. He wants congregations to be lazy and hire clergy to serve them, rather than serving themselves and sending laborers out into the harvest.

Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matt 16:12)

Some good men trying to do good works have started unscriptural institutions which remained good while their founder was alive. But Satan loves unscriptural institutions because when he corrupts them, which usually happens within a few generations, he is able to inflict far greater damage to the work of the gospel than when he corrupts a single family or congregation.

The apostles were uneducated and untrained men. (See Acts 4:13) It doesn't take a degree to be a martyr. To become clergy in counterfeit Christianity you put in a few years at an institution and get a certificate saying you're a pastor, minister, or reverend. In God's book, leadership development looks a lot more like on-the-job apprenticeship than sitting in a classroom.

Crafty individuals have invented a number of unscriptural positions, traditions, and institutions that get them a comfortable retirement on earth, while thousands perish every day. Those with position ambition who seek titles and desire prestige engage in self-exaltation. They don't want to suffer for Jesus. They are like those who were jealous of and murdered Jesus and His apostles.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. (John 10:10-13)

Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will... For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. (Phil 1:15, 3:18-19)

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming. (Eph 4:14)

Each one of us needs to put our trust in the word of God, rather than the word of men. Study, pray, memorize, encourage one another, and evangelize! We need to develop such a solid relationship with Christ that it cannot be shaken by the trials and hardships of spiritual warfare. The bloodthirsty dragon is not going to let up on his cunning attacks against your faith until he's thrown into the lake of fire.

Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were SO. (Acts 17:11)

Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, *without blame* at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thess 5:21-23)

If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with *the doctrine conforming to godliness*, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, *who suppose that godliness is a means of gain*. But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. (1 Tim 6:3-9)

For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed - for our testimony to you was believed. (2 Thess 1:6-10)

Most Importantly, The Eternal

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 5:8-11)

The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (Matt 13:41-43)

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world..." Then He will also say to those on His left, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into *the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels...*" These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (Matt 25:31-46)

It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell.

The wicked will be thrown out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. They will go into the unquenchable fire, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched, and the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night.

These descriptions all come straight out of Scripture. (See Matt 18:7-9; 25:30; Mark 9:42-48; Rev 14:11) There is nothing more terrifying than to consider spending your eternal life in hell! This image should be burned into your mind during the time of your stay on earth to keep yourself focused on doing whatever is necessary to rescue yourself and everyone you can from the furnace of fire.

For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. (2 Tim 2:10)

And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of

life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev 20:10-15)

The Reward

He who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. (Heb 11:6)

This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. (1 John 2:25)

God uses both positive and negative motivators. We are at war, and in any war there are winners and losers. We need to keep in mind that nothing in this life matters except those things that will determine our eternal reward.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matt 6:19-21)

Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. (John 4:36)

He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. (John 12:25)

Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You." Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life." (Mark 10:28-30)

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2 Cor 4:16-5:1)

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. (Gal 6:7-9)

Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever. (Rev 22:1-5)

Eternal Salvation: It's an Open-Book Test

He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; *the word* I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. (John 12:48)

Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short that it cannot save; nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear. (Isa 59:1-2)

And having been made perfect, He became to *all those who obey Him* the source of eternal salvation. (Heb 5:9)

He has given us plain and simple instructions to follow. He is the source of eternal salvation; He paid the penalty for our sin; He sets the terms of forgiveness. If you ask ten people what the terms are, you'll likely get ten different answers. But they don't set the terms, and neither do we.

The LORD'S hand is not so short that it cannot save, but He's simply not going to save those who refuse to obey His simple instructions. Naaman was a foreigner who wanted Elisha, a prophet of the God of Israel, to save him from his leprosy.

So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha. Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and you will be clean."

But Naaman was furious and went away and said, "Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.

Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, "My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean. (2 Kings 5:9-14)

Could God have healed Naaman at Elisha's word or some way other than washing in the Jordan? Certainly. The water is not inherently powerful. Would Naaman have been cleansed if he dipped

himself six times, and then turned again in a rage? No. The word of the man of God was, “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times.” Simple obedience is all that’s required.

We need to be saved from our sins. We want eternal salvation. Jesus wants to cleanse us of sin and share His spiritual riches with us.

For this reason He is the mediator of a *new covenant*, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the *eternal inheritance*. (Heb 9:15)

In the same way that a rich man can give money to whomever he wishes, Jesus gives spiritual riches to whomever He wishes. Once a rich man dies the only way to get money from his estate is through his last will and testament. Likewise, after Jesus’ death on the cross the only way to get His spiritual riches is through His last will and testament. In this case, testament means the same thing as covenant.

For where a covenant [testament] is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. For a covenant [testament] is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. (Heb 9:16-17)

The gospel accounts record the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. They reveal that He had authority on earth to forgive sins. The new covenant began with Christ’s death on the cross. The New Testament was not valid or in force until *after* His death.

When [Jesus] had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them. And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?” Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, “Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven’; or to say, ‘Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,” -- He said to the paralytic, “I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.” And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this.” (Mark 2:1-12)

Jesus had authority on earth to forgive sins. Which covenant was in effect here, old or new? Since Jesus hadn’t died yet the old covenant was still in effect. Jesus had authority on earth to pass out spiritual riches to whomever He chose.

When He was hanging on the cross: One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, “Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!” But the other answered,

and rebuking him said, “Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he was saying, “Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!” And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:39-43)

At the peak of His personal pain, Jesus was still giving out spiritual riches. Which covenant was in effect here, old or new? Since Jesus hadn’t died yet the old covenant was still in effect. Again, Jesus had authority on earth to pass out spiritual riches to whomever He chose.

The full terms of salvation under the new covenant were not valid or in force until they had been announced after His death, as recorded in the book of Acts and the epistles. Let’s look at a few examples of people being saved and learn the simple terms of Jesus’ last will and testament.

A jailer in Philippi understood his need and asked: “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household. (Acts 16:29-34) Did he have to *hear and believe* the word of the Lord in order to receive Jesus’ spiritual riches?

These Jews had just heard and believed a convincing sermon that was concluded with: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ -- this Jesus whom you crucified.” Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:36-38) Did they have to *repent* in order to receive Jesus’ spiritual riches?

After hearing and believing, this Ethiopian eunuch was excited about leaving his past behind: The eunuch answered Philip and said, “Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?” Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing. (Acts 8:34-39) Did he have to make the *good confession* (See also Rom 10:9-10) in order to receive Jesus’ spiritual riches?

Saul had heard, believed, repented, and confessed (See Acts 22:6-10). Then he was told: “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.” (Acts 22:16) Did he have to *be baptized* in order to receive Jesus’ spiritual riches?

What must *I* do to receive Jesus' spiritual riches?

1. Hear
2. Believe
3. Repent
4. Confess
5. Be Baptized

The Scripture cannot be broken, but false teachers try to make it contradict itself: "It says here (John 3:16 for example) that all we have to do is believe, so baptism isn't necessary for salvation." They select which Scriptures they think we should go by, and reject or distort the ones they don't like.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. (2 Tim 3:16-4:4)

We're not here to tickle anybody's ears. We want to overthrow false teachers by bringing people to the knowledge of the truth. That's what the spiritual revolution is all about. But it's only going to happen if we throw off the uninspired words of men and go only by the inspired word of God. It's all true! Believe it! Obey it!

Three Questions:

1. Does the Bible specifically say that you are saved from your sins and receive the indwelling Holy Spirit by saying a prayer and 'accepting Jesus into your heart'?
2. Are there any Scriptural examples of sinners being converted to Christianity after hearing a gospel preacher conclude his sermon by telling the convicted sinners that they should say a prayer and accept Jesus into their heart to be saved?
3. What Scriptures talk about baptism and what do they say about it?

Three Answers:

1. The Bible never says that you are saved from your sins and receive the indwelling Holy Spirit by saying a prayer and 'accepting Jesus into your heart'. There are several Scriptures that specifically say how you receive the indwelling Holy Spirit and are saved (receive forgiveness of sins). See below for details.
2. There are several Scriptural examples of sinners being converted to Christianity after hearing the gospel preached. But no preacher concluded his sermon by telling the convicted sinners that they should say a prayer and accept Jesus into their heart to be saved. There were no conversions anywhere in the Bible that happened this way.
3. We will list many Scriptures that talk about baptism so you can see for yourself what God has to say about it.

Two Baptisms:

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 1:4)

Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)

John’s baptism was only for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus’ baptism is also to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of *water* and the *Spirit* he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the *washing of regeneration* and *renewing by the Holy Spirit*. (Titus 3:5)

Are You a Christian?

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you -- unless indeed you fail the test? (2 Cor 13:5)

If indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, **he** does not belong to **Him**. (Rom 8:9)

You are a Christian only if His Holy Spirit dwells in you. This is the test to see if you are in the faith! Paul used this test on some disciples at Ephesus where Apollos had been preaching. Apollos was “acquainted only with the baptism of John,” (Acts 18:25) and so were these disciples until Paul further enlightened them.

Paul found some disciples and said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said to him, “No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” And they said, “Into John's baptism.” Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 19:1-5)

This further illustrates the reason for being baptized in Jesus’ name. These men needed to be re-baptized, this time through faith in Jesus to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For you are all sons of God *through faith* in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. (Gal 3:26-27)

Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him *through faith in the working of God*, who raised Him from the dead. (Col 2:12)

In what are you going to place your faith for eternal salvation: the word of men or the Word of God? The Bible never says that you are saved from your sins and receive the indwelling Holy

Spirit by saying a prayer and ‘accepting Jesus into your heart’. This is a manmade myth. But don’t take our word for it!

Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. (Acts 17:11)

If you believe that Jesus is Lord and Christ; if you repent of your sins; and if you are willing to make the good confession before witnesses that Jesus is Lord and Christ...

Why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name. (Acts 22:16)

Baptism now saves you -- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience -- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 3:21)

Conclusion

Satan wants to bring hell to you and your neighbors’ doorstep physically, spiritually and eternally. In addition to sin, the Scripture reveals that there are two major ways that Satan wages war against the saints and keeps families and communities under the chains of darkness: false religion and evil government. He corrupts individuals with sin, and is then able to use them in his deceptive schemes. You are either part of the problem or part of the solution.

We don’t know your individual circumstances. We do know that if you obey Jesus you will experience eternal glory and if you don’t obey Jesus you will experience eternal torment. We ask you to consider the reality of the Spiritual battle that is rapidly coming to a glorious conclusion. This means victory for all those who pledge their lives to the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Will you join the fight for truth? Will you educate yourself and others about the threats of the enemy? Will you restore Jesus Christ as the rightful Owner, Lord, and King of your life? Will you enjoy new levels of spiritual growth and Scriptural enlightenment? Will you help overthrow false teachers by bringing people to the true knowledge of our Savior, the one and only God who is blessed forever? Amen!

Ten Little Christians

Ten little Christians come to church all the time,
one fell out with the preacher, then there were nine.
Nine little Christians stayed up too late,
one over slept on Sunday, then there were eight.
Eight little Christians on their way to heaven,
one took the low road, then there were seven.
Seven little Christians chirping like chicks,
one didn't like the music, then there were six.
Six little Christians seemed very much alive,
one got travelitace, then there were five.
Five little Christians swimming for heaven's shore,
one stopped to rest awhile, then there were four.
Four little Christians each busy as a bee,
one got his feelings hurt, then there were three.
Three little Christians couldn't decide what to do,
one couldn't have his way, then there were two.
Two little Christians the story's almost done,
but one of them grew weary, then there was one.
One little Christian can't do much tis true,
but he won one, then there were two.
Two little Christians each got one more
just add them together, then there were four.
Four little Christians working early and late,
each won another, then there were eight.
Eight little Christians if they double as before,
in just seven Sundays 1,024.
In this little jingle there's a lesson true:
You either belong to the building or the wrecking crew.



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Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead. (Acts 17:30-31)